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FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEANHA/FAA HQ WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS ABIDJAN 001088

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y -- ADDRESSEE

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [FAIR](#) [ELAB](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [IV](#) [ECON](#)

SUBJECT: COTE D'IVOIRE: UPDATE ON AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS',
BANKING SECTOR STRIKES

REF: A. ABIDJAN 1083

[¶](#)B. ABIDJAN 1084

[¶](#)1. Air Traffic Controllers: As of 1500 GMT September 27th, the strike of the 27 Ivorian employees of the Agency for Aeronautical Security in Africa (ASECNA), which operates air traffic control at Abidjan's airport, was suspended for one month, allowing a full resumption of both domestic and international flights. According to local press reports, the local employees of ASECNA accepted a "personal" commitment by President Gbagbo to take their grievances to the ASECNA board of governors. The Ivorian controllers are demanding a pay increase of 2 million CFA per month (approximately \$3,877, a considerable sum here) as well as improvements to air traffic equipment. New Transport Minister Abdel Aziz Thiam, a technocratic former director of Cote d'Ivoire's railroad network (who was brought in to replace the former Minister who has been implicated in the ongoing toxic waste scandal), decried the "illegal" nature of the strike. He also expressed exasperation that the demands were presented to the Ivorian government and not ASECNA directly.

[¶](#)2. Bank Employees: As of 1200 GMT September 28th, this strike continues, despite attempts by President Gbagbo personally to bring it to resolution. In a widely reported snub, the banking workers' union failed to show up to a meeting with the President scheduled for 1600 GMT, September 27th. Government authorities have stated publicly that the strike is illegal, due to the union's failure to provide six days notice as well as its failure to respect the formal negotiating period. However, banking company executives have not yet threatened to fire striking employees.

[¶](#)3. Customs Agents Threatening: Customs agents have renewed their threats to shut down the country's ports in protest over the continued detention of three of their members in connection with the toxic waste dumping scandal. According to press reports, that action would begin on October 2nd.
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